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ABSTRACT

The statewide goals and objectives of Tennessee's plan for educational excellence, the 21st Century Challenge, are outlined in this legislative committee report. The major initiatives under each goal will be implemented within 3 to 4 years. Goals and an example of the several objectives under each goal are: first grade readiness (e.g., require all children to complete kindergarten); primary grades fulfillment (e.g., establish learning centers in urban housing projects to provide homework assistance and counseling for resident children and to provide for family members to learn parenting skills); high standards for student achievement (e.g., formulate specific goals for student achievement on a statewide and system-level basis); school success for disabled and at-risk students (e.g., establish jobs for Tennessee graduates programs and other school-to-work transition training programs for high school students); teaching professional enhancement (e.g., make salaries for starting teachers and the average salaries for all teachers the highest in the southeast and competitive throughout the country); adult literacy attainment (e.g., establish year-round literacy programs with full-time coordinators in each of the states' 95 counties); vocational education relevancy (e.g., integrate solid core of mathematics, sciences, and communications into the vocational curriculum); school district performance standards (e.g., require that local school board members participate in state designated and state conducted in-service training programs); college-ready high school graduates (e.g., establish and maintain college admission standards that include a core of required academic high school courses); fiscal adequacy and accountability assurance (e.g., provide incentive dollars in excess of funding in the basic formula for local school systems fulfilling performance standards); school-based decision making (e.g., focus state and local education policies on outcomes other than on procedures); and curriculum refinement (e.g., "look behind" the label of every course taught in the schools to assure current and future relevancy). The report outlines the agenda for state policy makers and is a strategic plan that is in various stages of planning, pilot testing, and implementation. (LMI)

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGE PLAN

Submitted to and approved by

the Legislative Oversight Committee

on Education - February 1990

Submitted to and approved by the

State Board of Education - March 1990

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STATEWIDE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

"If we fail to make our state's educational system second to none, we'll end up spinning our wheels in industrial recruitment -- and moving Tennessee further away from the warm glow of the Sun Belt."

With that ominous message, one of the state's leading daily newspapers concluded a strong editorial in support of educational improvements.

It is among the many editorial voices that have grown louder and become more frequent in recent months. Similar messages are pouring forth from business leaders and parents.

In short, education is increasingly becoming a top priority for more and more Tennesseans. It has become everybody's business.

The reasons are many and varied.

The simple reason is that the youngsters in our schools today and tomorrow represent our state's future.

It is their education which will determine in large measure whether our state improves its per capita income and enlarges its industrial base.

It is their education which will determine whether our communities improve the quality of life of our citizens.

And it is their education which will determine whether we increase or decrease our public welfare rolls and our prison population.

These realities underscore the importance of the role education must play as we move toward the 21st century.

It is a changing role that will require significant restructuring of our system of public education.

The educational system we have today is not significantly different from that in place in Tennessee at the midpoint of this century.

The structure is essentially the same.

Instructional tools and methods are similar.

Classrooms still have that familiar look.

In short, we are seeking to prepare today's youth for tomorrow in schools that were designed for yesterday.

Therein lies a central reason why so many students leave school today unprepared for college and the workplace.

The world has changed dramatically in this last half of the 20th century.

At the midpoint of this century, America was the undisputed economic giant of the world.

Industries seeking new locations looked more for cheap labor than for an educated work force.

School dropouts were no cause for concern because farm jobs and industry assembly line positions were available and did not require a degree.

The world in which we live today is quite different.

Today America's economic power is being challenged and tested by Japan, Korea, and many other countries.

Today industries are demanding an educated work force as a prerequisite for any plant location.

Today the school dropout finds opportunities on the farm almost extinct.

And in industry, robots are now handling the duties once given to the uneducated.

No longer is attainment of an education simply a personal goal, valued only by a student and his or her family.

It has become -- out of necessity -- a goal of society as a whole.

This is true because the young people who pass through our schools today will be our communities' voters of the future.

They will become our communities' work force of the future.

And if they fail, they will likely become our communities' welfare recipients and jail inmates of the future.

The point is that the day has long passed when citizens who have no children or whose children attend private schools can take the position that they have no stake in what happens in the public schools.

Education today is truly everybody's business.

It is a business that requires long-range planning and incremental action.

It is a business that requires accountability and public trust.

It is a business that requires careful evaluation and assessment.

It is a business that requires partnerships -- partnerships between government and the people; partnerships between parents and the schools; partnerships between state and local political leaders; and partnerships between business-industry leaders and school officials.

Partnerships yield common goals and a common sense of purpose, which in turn yield outcomes that meet identified needs.

Such is the primary mission of "21st Century Challenge: Statewide Goals and Objectives for Educational Excellence."

It has been written in the context of a firm commitment on the part of the leadership of Tennessee to have in place no later than the beginning of the 21st century school systems that meet the needs of our state.

It has been written out of a firm belief that clearly stated goals and sensible assessment measures are absolutely essential to the development of an educational system responsive to the needs of our state.

It has been written out of a heartfelt desire to ensure that every child who grows up in Tennessee will have an educational opportunity which will prepare him or her for the new century that lies ahead.

And it has been written with clear recognition that the time is short.

The 21st century looms a short decade ahead.

The children who will be members of our state's high school graduating class of the year 2000 are already enrolled in our schools.

It is with all of these thoughts in mind that the following goals and objectives are now presented. It should be stressed that to achieve the major goals set forth herein, the major initiatives under each goal will be implemented within a three- to four-year period. It should also be noted that every initiative set forth in "21st Century Challenge" is currently being pilot tested, is in advanced planning stages, or has been implemented.

GOAL NUMBER 1 -- FIRST GRADE READINESS

By no later than the first day of the 21st century, all entering first grade students -- rich and poor, black and white, urban and rural, gifted and disabled -- shall be prepared to achieve at the first grade level. This goal shall be achieved through fulfillment of five specific objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 1 -- REQUIRE ALL CHILDREN, INCLUDING THOSE WITH DISABILITIES, TO COMPLETE KINDERGARTEN.

At present, approximately 98 percent of the age-eligible children in Tennessee enroll in kindergarten. The two percent who do not are, in large measure, the ones who could benefit most from such an experience.

The "21st Century Challenge" has a basic premise that a strong foundation is essential if a child is to fulfill his or her potential in school. With that in mind, the McWherter Administration will propose in its 1991 legislative package that kindergarten become mandatory for all children, effective the 1992-93 school year.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2 -- MAKE EFFECTIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO ALL AT-RISK AND DISABLED STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.

Thousands of Tennessee youngsters enter schools each year not having had home experiences which prepare them adequately for classroom success. Many suffer from malnutrition and/or abuse. Some have never seen or had read to them a book of literary substance. These children have two strikes against them when they enter the schoolhouse.

The "21st Century Challenge" strongly embraces the proposition that a firm foundation in the zero to five years of age is absolutely critical to the development of school-ready children. It further endorses the federal Head Start Program and supports the expressed intent of the Bush Administration to extend Head Start to all eligible children.

A 30 percent increase in Head Start funding is set in the next federal budget. Additional funding increases are projected in subsequent years. Should the federal government fail to deliver full coverage by the middle of this decade, Tennessee shall develop a contingency funding plan to ensure that all eligible children are enrolled in Head Start or an equivalent state funded program by the fall of 1995.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 3 -- ESTABLISH STATE FUNDED INCENTIVE GRANTS TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARENTING SKILLS PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF PRESCHOOL AT-RISK CHILDREN.

Effective parent involvement programs require more than a successful recruitment strategy by school personnel. Research has shown that many parents are willing but not able. They lack some or all of the essential skills to give youngsters the home support they need to be prepared to enter school.

In recent years Tennessee has initiated several pilot programs to test a variety of approaches to improving parenting skills of preschool at-risk children. Approximately $300,000 per year is currently being invested in such programs.

The "21st Century Challenge" proposes that the state increase funding by $1 million per year for each of the next three years, with the intent being that by the 1995-96 school year all elementary schools with high percentages of at-risk students would have access to state grants.

Guidelines shall be developed by the state Department of Education, and grants shall be awarded on a competitive basis to school systems submitting the best proposals. All recipients shall be subject to a program audit by the state Department of Education.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 4 -- PROVIDE READINESS ASSESSMENTS FOR ALL CHILDREN PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF FIRST GRADE.

For a variety of reasons, children do not enter the first grade on equal footing. Some lack emotional maturity. Some have not mastered the basic skills to do first grade work. Some skipped kindergarten. Some lack a base of support at home.

If a teacher is to be effective at the first grade level, he or she must know from the first day of school where each student is developmentally so intervention strategies may be developed.

The "21st Century Challenge" does not advocate readiness assessment solely as a standardized, test-driven process or as a means to screen out or hold back unprepared students. To the contrary, this objective proposes readiness assessment as a holistic process involving teacher observation of individual students, structured discussion with kindergarten teachers, and direct involvement of parents in addition to the use of formal evaluation instruments.

The primary purpose of readiness assessment shall be to determine whether a student is prepared to go forth with first grade work and, if not, to develop intervention strategies to overcome deficiencies.

Achievement of this objective assumes that teachers will have smaller classes and access to staff development courses to prepare them for this task, that parents will be more knowledgeable and involved, and that technology will yield the data upon which to make valid judgments about each student.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 5 -- LINK HUMAN AND FISCAL RESOURCES OF ALL STATE AGENCIES INVOLVED IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES TO MINIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL AND NUTRITION DIFFERENTIALS AS CHILDREN ADVANCE FROM BIRTH TO AGE FIVE.

A wide array of state and federal services is available to dependent families. The problem is that these services are administered by a multitude of agencies. As a result, the needs of many families fall through the cracks.

The relevance of this void to the performance of children in schools has become increasingly clear in recent years. A child who suffers malnutrition as a baby is likely to arrive at school with the baggage of learning deficiencies. The same holds true for those who are abused or who are born to drug abusing parents.

The "21st Century Challenge" calls for the creation of a state administered Management Information System (MIS) that would link all relevant government agencies into a one-stop service to

identify the needs of families and to ensure that every family has knowledge and access to all available services.

Such a system is currently in the advanced planning stages and developmental costs are covered under other objectives. A cabinet-level council shall have jurisdiction over the coordination of services to be linked.

GOAL NUMBER 2 -- PRIMARY GRADES FULFILLMENT

By no later than the first day of the 21st century, every child who completes the third grade shall be prepared to read and write and solve mathematical problems effectively at the fourth grade level. Children with identified disabilities shall be expected to progress in accord with their IEPs (Individualized Educational Program) established by their M-Teams. This goal shall be achieved through fulfillment of seven specific objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 1 -- PROVIDE INCENTIVE FUNDING FOR DECREASING THE SIZE OF PRIMARY GRADE CLASSES IN SCHOOLS, WITH FIRST PRIORITY BEING GIVEN TO THOSE WHICH HAVE HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF CHILDREN FROM LOW SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENTS AND/OR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.

Tennessee's Project STAR has shown conclusively that students in primary grade classes with a 15-1 pupil-teacher ratio perform significantly better than those in classes with a 25-1 ratio. The research project further confirmed that children from low socioeconomic environments benefit most from the smaller classes.

Based in large part on the findings of Project STAR, the McWherter Administration initiated in the 1989-90 school year a primary grades class reduction plan which links state funding with federal Chapter 1 funding. Using per capita income as the criterion, the state Department of Education pumped $3 million into Tennessee's 15 poorest counties to lower the primary grades class size to 15-1

in every elementary school in which 60 percent or more of the students are eligible for free or reduced price lunches.

Under this federal-state partnership, Chapter 1 dollars fund class size reductions in schools with 75 percent of the students on the free or reduced price lunch program while state dollars fund the reduction in schools with between 60 and 75 percent of the children eligible for the lunch program. It should be noted that several more school systems in counties not among the 15 poorest have begun to use Chapter 1 dollars to lower class size to 15-1 in schools which have 75 percent of the students on the lunch program.

In addition to the 15-1 initiative for schools with high percentages of at-risk students, the "21st Century Challenge" will lower the primary grades class size to 20-1 in all other schools of the state through the new funding formula which is covered under another objective of this plan.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2 -- ASSESS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH A STATE ADMINISTERED TESTING PROGRAM DESIGNED TO GENERATE DIAGNOSTIC DATA FOR USE IN MODIFYING INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS AND IN UPGRADING CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION.

As educational reform swept across the nation during the decade of the 1980s, student testing was used primarily to assess performance of schools. In essence, test results gained scoreboard status.

The "21st Century Challenge" acknowledges the value of student testing as part of the overall school assessment process. However, the "Challenge" plan sets forth that the greatest value to accrue from student testing is the opportunity to intervene in the academic lives of students.

That is the central purpose of the new statewide testing program initiated in the 1989-90 school year. By eliminating the sporadic, disconnected testing program previously in place in Tennessee and by replacing it with a systematic, year-by-year assessment instrument, the state

Department of Education now has the capacity to provide every school system in the state with diagnostic data that may be used not only to identify student, teacher, or curriculum deficiencies, but also to intervene where necessary to correct such deficiencies.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 3 -- DEVELOP INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL FOR GIFTED STUDENTS AS WELL AS STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS HAVING DISABILITIES OR REQUIRING REMEDIATION.

Underlying the "21st Century Challenge" is a basic premise that the primary goal of Tennessee schools is to help every youngster fulfill his or her potential. Such a goal suggests that gifted as well as at-risk students have unique needs schools must accommodate.

The gifted deserve special challenges and creative opportunities; the at-risk require special attention and creative programs. And the place to start is in the primary grades.

The "Challenge" plan puts in place more staff development to help teachers become more effective in working with the gifted and at-risk, more funding to provide incentives for local educators to initiate special programs, more music and art instruction, and more use of school facilities for before- and after-school enrichment and remedial programs.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 4 -- ESTABLISH LEARNING CENTERS IN URBAN HOUSING PROJECTS BOTH TO PROVIDE HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE AND COUNSELING FOR RESIDENT CHILDREN AND TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FAMILY MEMBERS TO LEARN PARENTING SKILLS.

Urban housing projects represent a special challenge in any serious effort to improve our state's schools. This is true simply because a disproportionate number of the at-risk students live in the projects, many of them in single-parent home environments.

In the past, school officials have tried various approaches to reach out to the students living in the projects and to seek the involvement of their parents. In large measure, the efforts have failed.

In the fall of 1988, the McWherter Administration launched a pioneering initiative to intervene in the lives of project families with school-age children. In concert with the Metropolitan Nashville/Davidson County School System and the local housing authority, an apartment unit was designated as a learning center in the Preston Taylor Homes housing project, and credentialed educators began offering on-site services to residents and their children.

A year later, another learning center was opened in Memphis; and in the fall of 1990, new centers have been activated in Chattanooga and Knoxville. The goal is to have learning centers in every housing project in the state by the first day of the 21st century, a venture that will cost approximately $10 million.

While a definitive assessment is premature given the short time the centers have been in operation, the preliminary results show that student academic performance, attendance, and behavior have all improved among those youngsters who have been taking advantage of the centers. Moreover, an impressive number of parents who had never been involved in the school life of their children are now actively seeking to develop their parenting skills.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 5 -- PROVIDE GUIDANCE SERVICES FOR ALL PRIMARY GRADE CHILDREN.

The funding of elementary guidance counselor positions during the decade of the 1980s has been hailed by teachers, parents, and administrators alike as an essential move to assure that young children gain maximum benefit from their early years of schooling. The problem is that the existing positions are too few and the counselors are spread too thinly.

The "21st Century Challenge" affirms the value of elementary guidance counselors and acknowledges the need for more funded positions. The funding formula referenced in another section of the plan includes provision for additional funding and positions.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 6 -- ESTABLISH FORMAL PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS TAUGHT BY TRAINED PERSONNEL IN ALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, WITH INCENTIVES PROVIDED FOR PARTICIPATING PARENTS.

Effective schools require strong parent involvement, but history has demonstrated clearly that parent involvement generally does not just happen accidentally. It requires cultivated good faith and cooperation among teachers, principals and parents.

Potential barriers must be overcome. Teacher concerns that involved parents will become a burden must be allayed. Parent laments that they would like to be involved but don't know what to do must be addressed.

The key lies in the development of a well-designed plan and an effective training program. Tennessee has had success in recent years in the establishment of several model programs that offer different approaches to achieving meaningful parent involvement in the schools.

The "21st Century Challenge" seeks to place formal parent involvement programs in every elementary school in the state. It further proposes that competitive grants of up to $50,000 per school be made available to those which submit substantive proposals based on criteria developed by the state.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 7 -- ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS SERVING A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH PARENTS WORKING OUTSIDE THE HOME: (1) TO ENABLE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND PARENTS WORKING OUTSIDE THE HOME, AND (2) TO DECREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN UNSUPERVISED AND POTENTIALLY UNSAFE ENVIRONMENTS BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL.

Best evidence shows that some 150,000 school children in Tennessee go home from school in the afternoon to an empty home. That is roughly one out of every six school children in the state.

The McWherter Administration sought to address the issue in 1988 by securing passage of legislation to permit and encourage local school systems to operate before- and after-school programs in their facilities. The state Department of Education followed by dedicating staff on a full-time basis to assist school systems in developing such programs.

The results have been phenomenal. In the first year following passage of the legislation, the number of systems with school-based programs increased from 2 to 35 and the number of schools from 4 to 115.

The "21st Century Challenge" seeks further expansion of the program. And it should be noted that the programs do not require additional funding in that they are self-supporting.

GOAL NUMBER 3 -- HIGH STANDARDS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

By no later than the first day of the 21st century, achievement levels of Tennessee students shall exceed the national average and be in the top one-third of the states in the Southeast. This goal shall be achieved through fulfillment of seven specific objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 1 -- FORMULATE SPECIFIC GOALS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT ON A STATEWIDE AND SYSTEM-LEVEL BASIS.

Assessing student achievement has been an elusive goal for educators and politicians alike. In the decade of the 1980s, national and state report cards emerged as the dominant mechanism to satisfy calls for accountability. But the track record of using raw test scores to compare student performance in different school districts and different states is littered by the reality that at best they offer "apples and oranges" comparisons and at worse they tell us very little about school, teacher, and curriculum strengths and weaknesses.

What is needed today and beyond is a sensible and defensible assessment process. What do students need to know? When do they need to know it? And how do we determine that they do know it? These are the key questions.

Tennessee's new testing program is a major step toward providing a mechanism responsive to the questions posed above. By providing year-by-year testing, student progress may be assessed. It becomes feasible to gauge the value added to a student's education on an annual basis. It also permits mean-matching of school systems and individual schools to draw "apples and apples" comparisons based on a common set of socioeconomic factors.

The "21st Century Challenge" assumes that there are four major checkpoints the in academic lives of K-12 students. Are they prepared to enter the first grade? Have they mastered the basics in the primary grades before they enter the fourth grade? Has the middle school prepared them adequately for the high school experience? And, most important of all, are they completing high school with the skills necessary to make it in college or the workplace?

Tennessee is developing a tailor-made set of assessment instruments designed to provide answers to all of the questions above. The timetable calls for the complete system to be in place no later than the beginning of the 1993-94 school year.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2 -- BUILD AND MAINTAIN A STRONG STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM WHICH USES NATIONALLY NORMED, STANDARDIZED INSTRUMENTS.

The initiation of the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) was a major first step toward fulfilling this objective. Tennessee now has in place a comprehensive program that provides year-by-year evaluation of student progress on a nationally normed, grade-level basis as well as customized assessment of basic skills.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 3 -- PLACE PRIORITY EMPHASIS ON THE DIAGNOSTIC USE OF TEST RESULTS TO IMPROVE STUDENT AND TEACHER PERFORMANCE.

The prevailing use of student assessment programs in the 1980s was to produce scorecards, comparing and ranking school districts. A secondary -- and sometimes totally overlooked -- use was to

utilize test results for diagnostic purposes so intervention could seek to correct student deficiencies, to improve teacher effectiveness, and to revise curricula.

The "21st Century Challenge" seeks to reverse the priority, making scorecards a distant second priority. Top priority is on diagnosing problems and shaping strategies to overcome them. TCAP offers the opportunity to do just that, and a program is being developed to provide local school systems with the data and the training to shape intervention programs.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 4 -- DEVELOP A VALUE-ADDED ASSESSMENT PROGRAM TO DETERMINE MORE PRECISELY THE DEGREE TO WHICH SCHOOLS ARE INCREASING KNOWLEDGE AND COMPREHENSION AMONG STUDENTS THEY SERVE.

As suggested earlier, one of the primary advantages of a consistent, year-by-year assessment of students is the opportunity to gauge the degree to which students gain in knowledge and understanding at each grade level. TCAP offers such an opportunity from the primary grades through the middle schools, and Tennessee is currently engaged in a major research effort with the American College Testing Program to produce a similar value-added assessment yardstick for the high school years. It is believed that a total K-12 value-added assessment process can be in place in Tennessee by the beginning of the 1993-94 school year.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 5 -- PROVIDE STATE-LEVEL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO ASSIST LOCAL EDUCATORS IN THE APPROPRIATE USE OF TEST RESULTS, BOTH FOR DIAGNOSTIC PURPOSES AND FOR REDESIGNING CURRICULA.

This objective is already being fulfilled by the State Testing officials. Within the past 18 months, more than 18,000 local educators have voluntarily participated in state Department of Education training programs designed to bring local educators up-to-speed in the use of test results to improve student and teacher performance and to upgrade curriculum. In addition, software programs for local computer analysis of test data have been made available. The state Department of Education will continue to make these training and computer analysis programs available to local educators.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 6 -- DEVELOP A NEEDS-DRIVEN FUNDING FORMULA TO ENSURE THAT EVER SCHOOL SYSTEM IS OPERATING AT A WELL-DEFINED BASE LEVEL OF FISCAL SUPPORT.

To achieve the objectives set forth under this goal, every school system in the state must have a well-defined baselevel of fiscal support. That is the primary goal of a new needs-driven formula which the McWherter Administration will propose to the Tennessee General Assembly. Details of the proposed new formula will be covered under separate objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 7 -- PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INCENTIVE FUNDING TO LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM WHICH DEMONSTRATE SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT, INCLUDING VALUE ADDED TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPREHENSION OF STUDENTS THEY SERVE.

The proposed new funding formula will include a component that provides the opportunity for local school systems to receive funding over and above the baselevel funding. The extra funding would be awarded based on a clearly established set of criteria.

GOAL NUMBER 4 -- SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR DISABLED AND AT-RISK STUDENTS

By no later than the first day of the 21st century, the statewide high school completion rate shall be at least 80 percent. This goal shall be achieved through fulfillment of nine specific objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 1 -- DEVELOP SPECIFIC STATE AND LOCAL INITIATIVES THAT ASSURE EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF, AND INTERVENTION FOR, CHILDREN AT RISK OR WITH DISABILITIES.

The McWherter Administration announced several months ago a 15-point program to fulfill this objective. Additionally, by mandating that local school systems conduct annually a data-based needs assessment and that they develop five-year plans with quantifiable goals and objectives, the state Department of Education now has programs in place that assure that the needs of at-risk and disabled children are being addressed.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2 -- TARGET MIDDLE SCHOOLS AS SITES FOR DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE CAREER AWARENESS PROGRAMS TO HELP AT-RISK STUDENTS: (1) APPRECIATE THE VALUE OF A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION, AND (2) UNDERSTAND THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ACQUIRING A DEGREE.

The new college admission criteria requiring more math, science, and foreign language have pushed career decision making more and more into the middle school years. Students are having to decide earlier than in the past which direction they want to go during their high school years -- college bound or vocational. This reality makes vital the placement of more concentrated career awareness programs in the middle schools. At present, several model programs are being developed and tested in middle schools across the state. The state's timetable calls for every middle school to have access and funding for such programs by no later than the beginning of the 1993-94 school year.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 3 -- ESTABLISH JOBS FOR TENNESSEE GRADUATES PROGRAMS AND OTHER SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.

One of the pervasive problems which contribute to the state's school dropout problem is the lack of linkage between the classroom and the workplace. Stated simply, many students fail to grasp the relationship between academic preparation and success in the workplace.

During the 1980s, the state took an important step to address this problem by establishing a school-to-work transition program under the banner of the national Jobs for America Graduates Program. This program offers to students career counseling, part-time work opportunities, and if students persist until graduation, job placement.

Initially, the Tennessee initiative was a loosely connected, regionalized activity that served a relatively small number of students. Within the past 18 months, however, the McWherter Administration has converted the Jobs for Tennessee Graduates Program into a statewide venture.

As a result, the number of high schools offering the program has increased more than 30 percent, making Tennessee the nation's leader in student participation in a program that is now in 18 states.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 4 -- PROVIDE INCENTIVE GRANTS TO HIGH SCHOOLS FOR DEVELOPING PROGRAMS TO HELP PREGNANT TEENAGERS AND TEEN-AGE PARENTS: (1) ACQUIRE A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION, AND (2) LEARN PARENTING SKILLS.

It has been clearly established that teenage pregnancy is a major contributor to the state's dropout rate. Yet, until recently, few school systems had factored this problem into their dropout prevention strategies. The state had done nothing. This objective gives high priority to the problem and provides funding incentives for local systems to develop programs to address the issue.

In the 1989-90 school year, the state Department of Education awarded a $50,000 grant on a competitive proposal basis to the Fayette County School system to implement a program to get pregnant teenagers back in school and offer services to both teen-age parents and their youngsters.

Through funding provided by the Tennessee General Assembly during the 1990 session, 13 additional school systems will be eligible to compete for state grants for the 1990-91 school year. By the beginning of the 1993-94 school year, the plan is to make available to every school system which develops a workable plan sufficient funding to have an impact.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 5 -- SUPPORT DRUG-FREE TENNESSEE PROGRAMS IN ALL SCHOOL SYSTEMS.

Without question, drugs have a significant impact on dropout rates in our state's schools. A drug education and intervention program is essential to any serious effort to keep Tennessee students in school.

This objective recognizes that reality, and it has already been fulfilled. Every Tennessee school system now has in place a Drug-Free Tennessee Program; funding has been increasing significantly each year, and further expansion of the program is anticipated.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 6 -- EXPAND THE GOVERNOR'S STUDY PARTNERS PROGRAM (PEER TUTORING) TO INCLUDE ALL HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE STATE.

This low-cost, high-yield program has been described by some educators as "the real sleeper" in the "21st Century Challenge" plan to reduce Tennessee's dropout rate. Begun on a pilot basis in 25 high schools during the 1987-88 school year, the Partners Program is now in place in approximately one-third of the state's high schools.

In essence, the program places achieving students with those who need assistance. The state's role is to solicit and train local educators to establish programs, coordinate peer matches, and oversee their relationships.

At present, a waiting list of schools seeking to start Governor's Study Partners programs exists. The goal is to have such a program in every high school by the beginning of the 1993-94 school year. Early results show that the academic performance, attendance, and attitude of program participants -- both those being tutored and those who are tutors -- generally improve significantly.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 7 -- ESTABLISH A SYSTEM DESIGNED TO COLLECT AND REPORT STATE DROPOUT DATA ACCORDING TO A COMMON DEFINITION.

Historically, Tennessee -- like every other state -- used a very inexact process for determining dropout rates. In essence, the old system took enrollment data for the ninth grade and compared it with twelfth grade enrollments four years later. For obvious reasons, the data produced questionable results. For example, it did not take into account fluctuations in community populations caused by plant closures or openings. Nor did it take into account students who died or moved to other communities.

Tennessee became the first state in the nation to adopt and implement a common definition of a dropout when it designed and pilot tested a new system in the 1988-89 school year. The system was implemented statewide a year later, and the first comparative data will be available in the fall of 1990.

The system uses a simple definition which states that a dropout is any student who leaves school for any reason other than a transfer to another school system or death. Through the use of student social security numbers and a computer program, students are now tracked annually and reports are required annually from local school systems.

The definition is fully consistent with that developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and currently being implemented across the nation. As a result, Tennessee will be able to link with other states and extend its dropout tracking beyond the state line.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 8 -- DEVELOP STATEWIDE AND LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM PLANS FOR REDUCING DROPOUT RATES, PLANS THAT (1) DEFINE AND LINK THE ROLES OF SCHOOL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES, AND (2) PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO LOCAL SCHOOLS FOR MAKING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS.

As cited earlier, the mandated local needs assessments and five-year plans have built-in mechanisms to assure fulfillment of this objective. The new funding formula will provide the incentives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 9 -- ASSESS HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OPTIONS TO ENSURE (1) THAT VARIOUS KINDS OF EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ARE BEING MET FOR DIFFERENT CAREER PATHS, AND (2) THAT GUIDANCE SYSTEMS ADVISE AND SUPPORT STUDENTS IN THE LINKAGE OF EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS TO THE CAREER OPTIONS SO THAT STUDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO WANT TO STAY IN SCHOOL AND ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS.

Historically, high school students have had three options from which to choose in selecting a course of study -- college prep, vocational, or general. Yet, those three tracks lead to only two

destinations -- college or the workplace. Therein lies an inherent problem in the traditional high school program.

The "21st Century Challenge" acknowledges the folly of having three tracks leading to two destinations, and this objective, as well as others under the goal relating directly to vocational education, seeks to correct the problem. Specifically, the general track will be eliminated.

In essence, the McWherter Administration is proposing that the high school curriculum be restructured to require that all students pursue a common set of basic competencies during their freshmen and sophomore years. This proposal does not mean that every student should take identical courses. For example, some may take traditional physics while others may take applied physics. Some may take agricultural science while others take general science.

The central point of the proposed restructuring is that every student should be counseled into the particular courses that best suit their personal needs and interests, but as a result of the revisions in existing curricula, all students will emerge from the first two years with the same basic set of competencies.

This approach will give students and their counselors more time to assess academic performance and career options and to develop and pursue intervention strategies.

GOAL NUMBER 5 -- TEACHING PROFESSION ENHANCEMENT

By no later than the first day of the 21st century, teaching shall be a profession of choice for a significant portion of the best and brightest graduates of the state's colleges and universities. This goal shall be achieved through fulfillment of 11 specific objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 1 -- MAKE SALARIES FOR STARTING TEACHERS AND THE AVERAGE SALARIES FOR ALL TEACHERS THE HIGHEST IN THE SOUTHEAST AND COMPETITIVE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

A decade ago, teacher salaries in Tennessee were among the lowest in the nation. Today, they rank 34th in the nation and above the Southeastern average for the first time in the state's history.

The "21st Century Challenge" calls for further improvements to make the teaching profession more attractive to more young people choosing careers. Making teacher salaries competitive nationally and tops in the Southeast will require funding beyond the norm during the decade of the 1990s because other states will also be making improvements.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2 -- MAKE THE WORKPLACE FOR TEACHERS A MORE PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT: (1) BY PROMOTING MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL DECISION MAKING, (2) BY MINIMIZING REQUIRED PAPERWORK AND MENIAL TASKS, AND (3) BY PROVIDING ADEQUATE SUPPORT STAFF AND TEACHING MATERIALS.

Teachers are trained professionals, yet in most schools they are unable to do much of what they do best simply because of the excessive burden of paperwork and menial tasks. Moreover, they have little influence on school policies and procedures, and they lack adequate support staff and teaching materials.

Other initiatives in the "21st Century Challenge" seek to correct the problems described above. For example, the statewide Management Information System (MIS) that is being designed will eliminate a significant portion of the paperwork now required of local school systems.

Also, the move to site-based decision making will bring teachers into the mainstream of policymaking, and the new funding formula will guarantee adequate support staff and teaching materials.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 3 -- PROMOTE INITIATIVES TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION, INCLUDING MAKING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF TEACHERS MORE VISIBLE TO THE PUBLIC.

Over the past three years, the number of school systems and local communities sponsoring teacher appreciation events has increased five-fold. Recognition of teachers is now the norm rather than the exception in communities all across the state.

The governor's A+ Award requires teacher appreciation events and affirmative action to make teachers more visible to the public. The "21st Century Challenge" calls for continued action and higher awareness.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 4 -- TARGET MINORITY STUDENTS FOR SPECIAL INCENTIVES BOTH (1) TO ENTER TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS, AND (2) TO BECOME CLASSROOM TEACHERS.

Like most other states, Tennessee is facing a difficult challenge in producing more minority teachers. At present, roughly 22 percent of the state's K-12 students are minorities, while only 10 percent of the teachers are minorities. The latter percentage has been dropping steadily over the past decade.

Several months ago, the governor appointed a Minority Teacher Task Force and charged it with the responsibility of recommending strategies for attracting more minorities into the teaching profession. The plan calls for more support for future teachers' organizations, more funding for expansion of the loan/scholarship program for prospective teachers, specific strategies to produce early identification of prospective minority teacher candidates, and the establishment of teaching fellows service awards for outstanding minority high school seniors.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 5 -- PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND REWARDS FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE.

Effective during the 1989-90 school year, the McWherter Administration initiated a mini-grant program for teachers with creative teaching ideas. In year one, 53 mini-grants of $250 each were awarded to Tennessee teachers on a competitive basis.

The program is open to all classroom teachers. In addition to single grants to individual teachers, a collective group of teachers may pool their ideas into a joint proposal to gain maximum benefit from an enlarged resource base.

The "21st Century Challenge" calls for expansion of the Creative Teaching Mini-Grant Program over a five-year period with the goal being a $250,000 allocation for 1,000 mini-grant awards by the end of the fifth year. In addition, a summer Academy for Creative Teaching is being designed.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 6 -- PROVIDE GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RETRAINING THROUGH IMPROVED AND CORRECTLY DIRECTED IN-SERVICE TRAINING, EXPANDED TEACHER ACADEMIES AND WORKSHOPS, TEACHER CENTERS, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO IMPROVE TEACHING.

Full implementation of the "21st Century Challenge" will alter dramatically the structure of Tennessee's schools. Changed forever will be the way we administer our educational systems, the way we teach and what we teach, and the way we set standards and assess outcomes. The new world being created will require a heavy investment of dollars and ideas to ensure that school personnel are ready to work effectively in the new environment envisioned by the plan.

Absolutely essential will be a brand new, cutting-edge professional development program that places heavy emphasis on the effective use of technology in the classroom, the proper way to use test results to diagnose student deficiencies and to shape intervention strategies, and the means of bringing local teachers and administrators into the mainstream of decision making in regard to all parts of the "21st Century Challenge."

To fulfill this objective, the state Department of Education will reorganize and expand its staff development operations and increase significantly fiscal support of such operations.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 7 -- MAKE THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHERS THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THE STATE'S CAREER LADDER PROGRAM.

In the early days of the Career Ladder, the program was perceived by many as simply a mechanism to rank teachers. The "21st Century Challenge" seeks to change that perception by placing more emphasis on the use of substantive and timely feedback by evaluators to Career Ladder candidates on strengths and weaknesses discovered in the evaluation process.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 8 -- LINK TEACHER EVALUATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CAREER LADDER PROGRAM TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO ENABLE TEACHERS TO OVERCOME IDENTIFIED DEFICIENCIES IN THEIR PERFORMANCE.

Career Ladder evaluations are important tools with which to determine teacher strengths and weaknesses. Yet the original Career Ladder Program offered little in the way of meaningful feedback to teachers in regard to improvement needs. Moreover, no effort had been made to link professional development programs to identified deficiencies.

The "21st Century Challenge" sets in place a direct linkage between Career Ladder evaluations and professional development. It should be stressed, however, that the plan in no way seeks to substitute professional development for evaluations in the process of determining who achieves specific levels on the Career Ladder.

The plan does call for the creation of professional development programs to accommodate teachers who do not achieve levels II and III of the Career Ladder Program. Such programs shall be designed to accommodate the needs of teachers who have been diagnosed as having certain deficiencies in the evaluation process.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 9 -- DEVELOP COOPERATIVE INITIATIVES WITH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TO REDESIGN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THAT GRADUATES ARE PREPARED: (1) TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY IN DIVERSE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS, (2) TO TEACH ALL STUDENTS, AND (3) TO ADDRESS THE CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES OR OTHER ADVANCEMENTS IN THEIR FIELDS.

Empirical data based on scientific surveys as well as the results of scores of personal discussions with classroom teachers offer conclusive evidence that the great majority of teachers today believe that their college experience did not adequately prepare them for the reality of the classrooms in which they eventually teach.

The state Department of Education and the colleges of education across the state must work together to reshape teacher education and staff development to be responsive to the three areas of concern identified in this objective.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 10 -- PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE MORE QUALIFIED CITIZENS WITH NONEDUCATION DEGREES TO BECOME LICENSED TEACHERS UNDER THE EXISTING STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY.

At present, State Board of Education policy permits citizens with college degrees and a prescribed number of credit hours in certain subjects to qualify for a temporary teaching license which may be renewed on an annual basis for up to five years.

The "21st Century Challenge" proposes modification in that policy, calling for the establishment of prestigious teacher education institutes to offer tailor-made programs of study for citizens planning career changes to enter the teaching profession.

Such programs of study would be offered in nontraditional time frames and provide a concentrated, specially designed curriculum. It would be modeled after the highly successful Tennessee Executive Development Program at the University of Tennessee.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 11 -- ESTABLISH A SYSTEM TO COLLECT AND REPORT THE DATA REQUIRED BOTH (1) TO TARGET AREAS OF TEACHING IN WHICH SHORTAGES ARE PROJECTED (AND/OR ACTUAL SHORTAGES EXIST), AND (2) TO CHART THE PARTICIPATION OF MINORITIES IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION.

This initiative is a part of the state Department of Education's broader plan to develop a comprehensive Management Information System (MIS) linking all school systems with the state. The Request for Proposals (RFP) for the MIS feasibility study, for which funding has been authorized, includes provision for the data system referenced by this objective.

GOAL NUMBER 6 -- LITERACY ATTAINMENT FOR ADULTS

By no later than the first day of the 21st century, no less than 90 percent of the Tennessee adult population shall be literate. This goal shall be achieved through fulfillment of five specific objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 1 -- ESTABLISH YEAR-ROUND LITERACY PROGRAMS WITH FULL-TIME COORDINATORS IN EACH OF THE STATE'S 95 COUNTIES.

Four years ago, Tennessee state government had no plan and no program to address the needs of the half million Tennesseans who could not read or write. Today, state funded full-time coordinators have been employed and year-round literacy programs are now in place in all 95 counties. Objective number 1 is a reality, and some 40,000 adult illiterates are now being served each year.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2 -- INITIATE WORKPLACE LITERACY PROGRAMS IN BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES BASED ON COOPERATIVE EFFORTS BETWEEN STATE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

Workplace literacy programs have now been established in 31 businesses and industries in Tennessee. Additional programs are being established monthly across the state. A waiting list of interested businesses and industries is being maintained.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 3 -- INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF RETURNING SCHOOL DROPOUTS WHO ENROLL IN AND COMPLETE THE GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED) PROGRAM.

In the three years since the McWherter Administration initiated its statewide strategy to reduce illiteracy, more than 40,000 adult Tennesseans have learned to read and write, enlarging significantly the pool of citizens ready and able to achieve a GED.

Through a conscious and concerted effort to link programs for undereducated adults, Tennessee has become one of the first states to provide a structured curriculum and sequential programs through which adults may advance from hard-core illiteracy to achievement of the GED via organized programs supported by the state.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 4 -- ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT HIGH SCHOOLS IN EXISTING FACILITIES WHERE NEEDED ACROSS THE STATE.

In 1989, the McWherter Administration successfully sought State Board of Education approval of a policy which makes establishment of adult high schools more feasible and attractive for local school systems. As a result, several adult high schools have been established, and several more are being planned.

A further incentive will be included as a part of the new funding formula which is a part of the "21st Century Challenge."

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 5 -- PLACE LITERACY PROGRAMS IN LEARNING CENTERS IN URBAN HOUSING PROJECTS.

Objective Number 4 under Goal Number 2 calls for the establishment of learning centers in the heart of urban housing projects to provide homework assistance and counseling for resident children and to provide opportunities for family members to learn parenting skills.

The same philosophy which shaped that objective guided the development of the strategy which includes literacy classes for adults in the learning centers. Again, housing projects contain a high concentration of at-risk families, including adults who can neither read nor write. Moreover, the delivery of literacy classes to where the people are, rather than simply trying to attract adults to classes

in school houses or other locations, enhances the potential that illiterates will take advantage of the opportunities provided by literacy classes.

GOAL NUMBER 7 -- VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RELEVANCY

By no later than the first day of the 21st century, all students graduating with an emphasis in vocational education shall possess the competencies required to compete effectively in the job market within their geographical area of choice and/or to succeed in postsecondary technical education. This goal shall be achieved through fulfillment of five specific objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 1 -- INTEGRATE A SOLID CORE OF MATHEMATICS, SCIENCES, AND COMMUNICATIONS INTO THE VOCATIONAL CURRICULUM.

In April of 1990, the McWherter Administration successfully sought State Board of Education approval of the new Principles of Technology course and a revised Agri-Science course, both of which contain heavy components of math and/or science. The revised Agri-Science curriculum has been designed to produce the same basic competencies as those derived from the traditional General Science curriculum.

The State Board of Regents and the University of Tennessee have confirmed the validity of the revamped Agri-Science curriculum by accepting it as an equivalent of General Science in their core curriculum required for admission to college.

The state Department of Education plans to rewrite all vocational education courses which have large components of math, science, and/or communications to achieve the same outcomes achieved with the Agri-Science course effort. And as stated in Goal 4, Objective 9, the traditional general track will be eliminated.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2 -- ASSESS BASIC READING, LANGUAGE, MATHEMATICS, AND SCIENCE COMPETENCIES OF MATRICULATING VOCATIONAL STUDENTS AND ESTABLISH THE NATIONAL AVERAGE AS THE MINIMUM LEVEL OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN SUCH ASSESSMENTS.

For years, the ACT and SAT have provided colleges and universities with assessments of matriculating students' readiness for success in higher education. Yet similar assessments of noncollege-bound students' readiness for the workplace have not been available.

As a result, vocational students have lacked any meaningful credential to help them make the transition from school to work, and potential employers have not had anything but a high school transcript to guide them in selecting among applicants.

In recent months, the McWherter Administration has begun discussions with the American College Testing organization regarding the feasibility of designing an ACT-equivalent assessment instrument for students who do not plan to attend college. Such a workplace readiness assessment would represent a major breakthrough in elevating the status of vocational education and provide an opportunity to use one or both of the testing instruments as a mechanism to assess the skills of all graduating seniors as well as the year-by-year effectiveness of the high schools from which they graduate.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 3 -- ESTABLISH A MONITORING SYSTEM TO MEASURE THE JOB PLACEMENT RATE OF VOCATIONAL STUDENTS.

This monitoring system will be incorporated into the comprehensive Management Information System (MIS) included in the "21st Century Challenge" and currently in the design stage.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 4 -- DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND INDUSTRY: (1) TO PROVIDE WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES FOR VOCATIONAL STUDENTS, AND (2) TO INCREASE VOCATIONAL TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF MANPOWER NEEDS OF LOCAL INDUSTRIES.

Successful models of partnerships have been developed in several sites across Tennessee during the past three years. This objective calls for continued expansion of such partnerships in all sections of the state.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 5 -- ADAPT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

This objective acknowledges that students with disabilities may require special consideration in the laboratory and workplace application of vocational education course work.

GOAL NUMBER 8 -- PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

By no later than the first day of the 21st century, all local school districts shall be prepared to demonstrate conclusively improved performance and productivity. This goal shall be achieved through fulfillment of 10 specific objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 1 -- REQUIRE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO DEVELOP FORMAL GOALS AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AS PART OF AN ANNUAL SCHOOL APPROVAL PROCESS ADMINISTERED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

In June 1989, the McWherter Administration successfully pushed State Board of Education adoption of an unprecedented requirement that local boards of education develop five-year plans with quantifiable goals and objectives. The requirement was made a part of the state school approval process.

The new requirement is considered by the administration to be a basic part of a comprehensive accountability process to assure the people of Tennessee that the state's educational systems know where they must go and how they will get there to secure the future of today's youth.

The local plans will be assessed by the state on the basis of the degree to which the plans respond to the needs identified through the local needs assessment process and the extent to which the goals are quantifiable.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2 -- REQUIRE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO DEVELOP ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES AND TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK IN REGARD TO THE DEGREE TO WHICH STATED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ARE ACHIEVED.

Tied to Objective Number 1 is another mandate requiring local school systems to submit annually reports on the status of each stated goal. This requirement is also linked to the school approval process.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 3 -- REQUIRE THAT LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN STATE DESIGNED AND STATE CONDUCTED IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMS.

Local school boards have a basic and primary responsibility to develop policies that reflect a clear and responsive vision for school systems. Fulfillment of that responsibility requires that local school board members understand the needs of the students their systems serve and the role that the school board must play as primary policymaker.

To be effective, school board members must have at least a basic understanding of school law and school finance. They must understand the difference between policymaking and day-to-day decision making. They must know how to seek consensus among the constituents they serve. And, above all, they must know how to group-think their way to a clear vision for their school systems.

In April 1990, the McWherter Administration secured State Board of Education approval of a new policy requiring local school board members to participate in seven hours of formal training each year. The mandated curriculum will be designed to provide the knowledge base set forth above.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 4 -- AUTHORIZE LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION TO APPOINT SUPERINTENDENTS.

One of the primary problems of K-12 education across the United States is the absence of a clear delineation of authority and responsibility. The basic question is: Who's in charge? In most communities, no one really knows.

The "21st Century Challenge" expresses a basic belief that clear and consistent lines of authority must be established. In that regard, policymaking is clearly the responsibility of local school boards. To ensure that policy is implemented and that accountability is established, school boards must be given the authority to appoint the chief executive officers of the school systems.

No one can nor should have to serve two masters, as is the case of the elected superintendent. Mandating the appointment of superintendents will clarify the lines of authority.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 5 -- EMPOWER SUPERINTENDENTS WITH THE AUTHORITY TO FUNCTION FULLY AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THEIR LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS, INCLUDING THE AUTHORITY TO SELECT PRINCIPALS AND CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF.

The other half of the "Who's in charge?" confusion equation that plagues local school governance today is the issue of personnel decision making. The "21st Century Challenge" takes the position that if superintendents are to be appointed by school boards, rather than elected by the people, then the superintendents logically should have the authority to select their own administrative team. To do otherwise would deprive superintendents of the opportunity to fulfill the confidence that school boards have demonstrated by making the appointment.

At the same time, it is crucial that the relationship between the superintendent and the principals and other staff appointees must be clearly defined and responsibilities and expectations clearly established through formal agreements. Relationships and responsibilities may differ from system to system; the point is that clear definitions must be established and due process protection for staff must be secured.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 6 -- FOCUS ON SCHOOL SITE-BASED RESULTS.

Traditionally, school systems have operated under the mandate of voluminous rules and regulations imposed by state and federal agencies. In too many cases, external control of schools has led to overemphasis on process and underemphasis on outcomes.

The "21st Century Challenge" expresses the philosophy that local school personnel generally know best what is needed to provide quality education for the children they serve. Flexibility is essential, and the opportunity to take risks is desirable if teachers and principals are to be maximally effective in fulfilling goals and objectives.

State and federal agencies should restrict their roles to outcomes assessment, technical assistance, staff development, governance structures, and accountability standards.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 7 -- EXPAND THE EXTENDED CONTRACT PROGRAM TO PROMOTE 12-MONTH UTILIZATION OF SCHOOL FACILITIES, WITH SPECIAL PRIORITY GIVEN TO USING THE SUMMER MONTHS TO TARGET SPECIAL NEEDS OF GIFTED AND AT-RISK STUDENTS.

The new Extended Contract Program, which places primary emphasis on needs assessments at the local level, has opened great opportunity for year-round use of local school facilities. Since the program was changed in 1988, almost every school system in the state is now operating summer programs. As funding for the Extended Contract Program grows, the concept of year-round schools in Tennessee will become the rule rather than the exception.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 8 -- REWARD SCHOOLS AS WELL AS TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS FOR ACHIEVING ESTABLISHED OBJECTIVES.

Historically, initiatives of teachers and principals have not been recognized or rewarded. This lack of incentive has not served well the needs of students or school personnel.

The new funding formula, as well as other separate initiatives of the McWherter Administration -- such as the creative teaching awards referenced earlier -- respond to this objective.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 9 -- SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND TRAINING AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS FOR HELPING PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS INCREASE PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMEN AT EACH SCHOOL SITE.

Parental and community involvement is absolutely essential to the development of quality schools in any community. Other initiatives in the "21st Century Challenge" address the specific needs of parents and community leaders to become involved. This objective targets teachers and principals and seeks to prepare them for the fulfillment of the important role of relating to parents and community leaders.

The state Department of Education will completely overhaul its professional development program and reorganize its staff to fulfill the new initiatives. Training for school personnel in the area of parent and community involvement will be a prominent part of the new program.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 10 -- INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS SO THAT SUCH PARTNERSHIPS EXIST IN EVERY SCHOOL IN THE STATE.

When the decade of the 1980s began, school-business partnerships were rare in Tennessee. Today, they exist in practically every community.

Adopt-A-School programs are important and must be promoted and nurtured. But, more is needed. Business leaders not only must adopt schools; they also must become involved in setting goals and assessing outcomes. School personnel and policymakers must be trained to maximize the involvement of business leaders.

GOAL NUMBER 9 – COLLEGE-READY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

By no later than the first day of the 21st century, all students admitted to state universities shall be prepared to begin college-level work. This goal shall be achieved through fulfillment of eight specific objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 1 -- ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN COLLEGE ADMISSION STANDARDS THAT INCLUDE A CORE OF REQUIRED ACADEMIC HIGH SCHOOL COURSES.

In recent years, Tennessee's public colleges and universities have established core-course requirements for admission. As a result, college-bound high school students know up front what courses must be taken to gain acceptance at the college level.

The "21st Century Challenge" sets forth that high school and college officials must develop formal processes whereby admissions standards may be assessed systematically to ensure continued relevancy.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2 -- PROVIDE A HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM THAT ADDRESSES THE ACADEMIC SUBJECTS AND COMPETENCIES SPECIFIED BY THE COLLEGE BOARD.

Recently enacted State Board of Education graduation requirements have increased significantly the number of high schools offering academic subjects and competencies which are consistent with College Board standards.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 3 -- ENSURE THAT EVERY HIGH SCHOOL OFFERS THE COURSES REQUIRED FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION.

In the five years since the public colleges and universities announced new admissions requirements, the number of high schools offering advanced math, science, and foreign languages has increased significantly. The McWherter Administration's initiative to fund distance learning centers has removed the final barrier to the offering of the advanced courses in remote, rural areas. At present, 28 school systems have state grants to set up satellite-based programs of study, and an additional 14 systems will be added each year until the need has been fulfilled.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 4 -- DEVELOP STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING GREATER PROMOTION OF EXISTING POLICIES WHICH PERMIT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO ENROLL IN COLLEGE CLASSES.

Given the stricter admissions requirements and the increasing percentages of students seeking admission to colleges, the need for formal and effective communication linkages between schools and

colleges has assumed greater importance. The "21st Century Challenge" acknowledges the increasing need and promotes school-college collaboratives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 5 -- DEVELOP ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS WHICH ALLOW HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TO ASSIST HIGH SCHOOLS IN DETERMINING THE COLLEGE READINE OF THEIR STUDENTS.

College readiness assessment is an essential part of preparing high school students for success in college. The "21st Century Challenge" proposes greater use of assessment instruments -- such as the P-ACT and the P-SAT -- to provide greater opportunity for early detection of deficiencies and timely intervention through counseling and course selection in the junior and senior years of high school.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 6 -- IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON THE AMERICAN COLLEGE TEST (ACT) AND THE SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST (SAT) TO A LEVEL THAT RANKS TENNESSEE AMONG THE TOP ONE-THIRD OF THE STATES NATIONALLY AND AMONG THE TOP THREE OF THE SOUTHEASTERN STATES.

In recent years, ACT and SAT scores of Tennessee students have improved steadily and currently rank at or above the Southeastern average in most categories. Being simply average is not enough.

To move into the upper ranks of the region will require specific strategies to improve counseling, to increase the taking of advanced courses, and to provide earlier intervention. Research has shown that students who take the P-ACT or P-SAT in their sophomore year score higher on the ACT or SAT two years later. The McWherter Administration is considering the extension of the P-ACT or P-SAT opportunity to every college-bound student in Tennessee. At present, about two-thirds of the state's high schools make the P-ACT available to their students.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 7 -- DEFINE MORE PRECISELY THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELORS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF CAREER COUNSELING AND COURSE WORK GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS.

As stated earlier, guidance counselors have assumed an increasingly key role in preparing students for college. Yet, historically, the role of the counselor has been ill-defined.

Two recent developments have brought greater clarity to the counselor role. In the first place, the addition of guidance counselors to the Career Ladder Program has established performance standards. Secondly, at the initiative of the McWherter Administration, a job description has been developed, and State Board of Education approval has made it official.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 8 -- EXPAND GOVERNOR'S SCHOOLS AND OTHER PROGRAMS FOR GIFTED STUDENTS.

The summer Governor's Schools have proved to be tremendous successes and popular options for the state's gifted students. The "21st Century Challenge" calls for the expansion in the number of the schools. Toward that end, the governor's 1990-91 budget includes funding for a new Governor's School for Prospective Teachers. Other schools are on the drawing board.

GOAL NUMBER 10 -- FISCAL ADEQUACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ASSURANCE

By no later than the first day of the 21st century, a comprehensive approach to funding schools shall be in place and such an approach shall be linked directly to goals and tied to accountability standards for quality and productivity. This goal shall be achieved through fulfillment of six specific objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 1 -- DEVELOP A FUNDING FORMULA THAT IS BASED ON IDENTIFIED CRITERIA AND DESIGNED TO PROVIDE THE FISCAL SUPPORT REQUIRED TO ENSURE A WELL-DEFINED AND SUFFICIENT BASELEVEL OF FUNDING IN EVERY SCHOOL SYSTEM IN THE STATE.

Tennessee's existing school funding formula is archaic, static, and unresponsive to the needs of local school systems. The "21st Century Challenge" proposes a needs-driven formula that includes factors to provide annual inflation adjustments and a base of support to assure a quality academic program.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2 -- PROVIDE INCENTIVE DOLLARS IN EXCESS OF FUNDING IN THE BASIC FORMULA FOR LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS FULFILLING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS.

In addition to the base formula, Tennessee's public schools should have the opportunity to secure additional fiscal support on a performance-incentive basis. The "21st Century Challenge" envisions a provision in the funding formula similar to the performance funding component which has been in the higher education formula for many years.

This provision will provide the opportunity for local systems to earn up to five percent above their baselevel appropriations on the basis of criteria developed by the state.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 3 -- ESTABLISH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAMS TO ENSURE THAT SCHOOL SYSTEMS ARE OPERATING STATE FUNDED PROGRAMS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE LAWS AND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULES AND REGULATIONS.

Historically, the state Department of Education has relied almost exclusively on the reports prepared by local school systems in determining compliance with state rules and regulations. This approach has proved to be bureaucratic and ineffective.

In 1989, a performance audit team was formed in the state Department of Education, and auditors now visit local school systems on a random basis to determine firsthand whether state funded programs are being operated in accordance with guidelines and whether prescribed goals and objectives are being fulfilled. The department shall increase the number of performance auditors and expand the coverage and frequency of the audits.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 4 -- REQUIRE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO CONDUCT ANNUAL WELL-DEFINED NEEDS ASSESSMENTS AND TO DEVELOP PROGRAM PLANS FOR RESPONDING TO THE IDENTIFIED NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS BEING SERVED.

Prior to 1989, formal needs assessments by local school systems were the exception rather than the rule. Such assessments are now required and linked closely with the mandated five-year plans.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 5 -- ESTABLISH A COMPETITIVE STATE GRANT PROCESS THAT ASSIGNS FUNDING TO ENSURE THE GREATEST IMPACT IN PROMOTING SPECIFIC INITIATIVES; FOR EXAMPLE, DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAMS, PARENT INVOLVEMENT EFFORTS, AND ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS.

In addition to base funding and a five percent add-on for performance, the "21st Century Challenge" proposes that a special fund be established at the state level to provide incentive grants to local school systems to address specific initiatives such as those referenced in the objective. These grants will be awarded on a competitive basis in accord with the merits of guidelines-driven proposals.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 6 -- DEVELOP A PRIVATE FUND-RAISING CAPABILITY WITHIN THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEVISE A STRATEGY FOR A MAJOR CAPITAL GIFTS CAMPAIGN TO ENRICH TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

For many years, higher education has been aggressively securing substantial funds from private sector businesses and industries. Giving to colleges and universities has been an accepted practice of the corporate world.

Such has not been the case with the public K-12 schools of our nation for two basic reasons: (1) public schools have not been staffed to seek corporate giving in the way that colleges and universities have, and (2) businesses and industries, until recently, had not viewed the public

schools as being relevant to their interests in the way and to the degree that colleges and universities were.

The reform movement of the past decade changed all of that. Today the corporate world fully recognizes that what happens in the public schools is vital to the future of America, and recent data suggest that the corporate dollar for education is beginning to shift away from colleges and universities to the public schools.

The "21st Century Challenge" seeks to promote corporate giving to the public schools by creating a private fund-raising capability in the state Department of Education and by developing a strategy for a major capital gifts campaign to enrich public schools.

GOAL NUMBER 11 -- SCHOOL-BASED DECISION MAKING

By no later than the first day of the 21st century, school-based decision making shall be the rule rather than the exception in all school districts of the state. This goal shall be achieved through fulfillment of seven specific objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 1 -- ELIMINATE STATE LAWS AND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULES AND REGULATIONS WHICH STIFLE CREATIVITY, DISCOURAGE ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVE, AND STRANGLE DECISION MAKING.

Over the years, state laws pertaining to public education have accumulated in abundance. In addition, State Board of Education rules and regulations now span four books equaling eight and one-half inches in thickness. Public schools are told how long the school day must be, how long reading must be taught, which textbooks must be used, to name just a few.

The "21st Century Challenge" proposes a massive overhaul of state laws and State Board of Education rules and regulations. Specifically, a proposal for eliminating 75 percent of the existing State Board rules and regulations is being developed. Moreover, procedures will be established which will permit local school systems to develop proposals for alternative approaches to operating schools.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2 -- FOCUS STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATION POLICIES ON OUTCOMES RATHER THAN ON PROCEDURES.

A review of existing laws and rules and regulations shows an overwhelming focus on procedures rather than outcomes. In other words, the state has traditionally tried to govern education by telling local school systems how to run their schools. Little emphasis has been placed on outcomes.

The "21st Century Challenge" calls for a reversal of current practice by freeing schools from restrictive policies and holding them more accountable for results.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 3 -- EMPOWER SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO BE IN CHARGE OF THEIR SCHOOLS.

The current role of the school principal in America varies greatly from district to district, and sometimes within the same district. No clear job description exists in most districts.

If clear lines of authority and responsibility are to be established, as called for in an earlier objective, the principal's role is among those positions that must be defined. In essence, the "21st Century Challenge" sets forth that the local school board shall set policy, the superintendent shall be chief executive officer with authority to hire and fire personnel, and the principal shall be given up front clearly defined authority and responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the school he or she heads.

The specific job description may differ from district to district. The primary point is that each principal should be given up front a clear definition of his or her role.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 4 -- GIVE TEACHERS A PLACE AT THE TABLE OF DECISION MAKING IN REGARD TO CURRICULUM, TEXTBOOKS, DISCIPLINE, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND ANY OTHER MATTER RELATED TO THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS.

Historically, teachers have had little say in matters that affect daily how and what they teach. Such a circumstance is consistent with the old industrial model in which workers had minimal involvement in plant operations.

The simple truth today is that the old industrial model is dead. Effective businesses and industries recognize that reality, and they have made appropriate changes in the workplace. Effective schools must do the same.

This does not mean that school board policymaking powers will be diminished or that superintendents must surrender authority. It does mean that teachers should be given a role in the formulation of policies and decisions that affect what happens in the classroom.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 5 -- MAKE PARENTS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS ACTIVE PARTNERS WITH LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND THE GENERAL OVERSIGHT OF SCHOOLS.

A school system or school without the active support and involvement of parents and community leaders is one in a state of decline. The effective school system will develop strategies to bring parents and community leaders into the mainstream of school governance. Such an involvement is essential to the development of a shared vision, which is an absolute necessity.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 6 -- DEVELOP STATE-LEVEL TRAINING PROGRAMS THAT WILL PREPARE TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO FULFILL ENLARGED ROLES AS DECISION MAKERS IN THE SCHOOLS.

It is not enough simply to seek more involvement of parents and community leaders. Such an effort in the absence of a sense of direction or a systematic program to train all participants may do more harm than good.

The state Department of Education is currently developing a package of staff development programs designed to provide appropriate training for all the players in the process.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 7 -- DEVELOP STATE-LEVEL PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO INSTILL POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND HIGH SELF-ESTEEM AMONG ALL INDIVIDUALS WHO WORK AND/OR STUDY IN LOCAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS.

Effective leadership in any organization is dependent in large measure on the creation of an environment where positive attitudes and high self-esteem prevail. The state Department of Education initiated in 1989 a series of pilot programs in schools across the state to test the value of a training program to build positive attitudes and high self-esteem.

The pilot programs were successful, and the training is now being made available through small grants to all interested school systems.

GOAL NUMBER 12 -- CURRICULUM REFINEMENT

By no later than the first day of the 21st century, the Tennessee school curriculum shall be on the cutting edge of knowledge and fully responsive to the vocational, academic, and special education needs of all students as well as the employment needs of this state's businesses and industries. This goal shall be achieved through fulfillment of nine specific objectives.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 1 -- "LOOK BEHIND" THE LABEL OF EVERY COURSE TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOLS TO ASSURE CURRENT AND FUTURE RELEVANCY.

Just as American public schools have been structured along the lines of the old industrial model, their curricula have been burdened by the shackles of the past. The lockstep, discipline-based curriculum appears archaic in modern times. Again, the focus seems to have been on process rather than on outcome.

The "21st Century Challenge" demands that the traditional curriculum be reviewed and assessed in the context of what students need to know to make it in the next century. Such an assessment will likely result in a breakdown in the ordering of disciplines and some departure from the lockstep approach.

The McWherter Administration shall establish incentive grants to encourage local school systems to review curriculum and to propose creative alternatives to existing course offerings. Departures from state curriculum frameworks and guides shall be approved on the basis of the quality of local proposals.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 2 -- ASSESS THE TRADITIONAL SEQUENCING OF COURSES IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN TIMES.

This objective is a secondary spin-off from Objective Number 1, and it shall be implemented through the same incentive grant process.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 3 -- CONDUCT A "TOP-TO-BOTTOM" REVIEW OF ALL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS AND GUIDES.

All of the existing curriculum frameworks and guides were developed during a time preceding the new focus on the creation of the 21st Century Classroom. During the 1990-91 school year, the Curriculum Division of the state Department of Education will initiate a comprehensive review of all existing frameworks and guides in the context of the emerging "21st Century Challenge" and make recommendations as appropriate to the State Board of Education.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 4 -- ANALYZE ALL TEXTBOOKS TO DETERMINE THEIR QUALITY AND RELEVANCY.

Historically, the textbook has been the primary teaching tool of teachers. The emergence of the 21st Century Classroom will change that circumstance by providing teachers with the tools of technology.

Nevertheless, the textbook will always have a place in a teacher's toolbox. It is, therefore, essential that the textbooks of tomorrow be relevant to and compatible with the tools of technology available to teachers.

During the 1989-90 school year, the McWherter Administration charged the State Textbook Commission with the responsibility of fulfilling the mandate of this objective. A report and recommendations are anticipated by the end of the 1990-91 school year.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 5 -- ASSESS TRADITIONAL TEACHING TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES FOR ALL DISCIPLINES TO DETERMINE CURRENT AND FUTURE VALIDITY.

The coming of the 21st Century Classroom will cast teachers in a new role. Traditionally, circumstances such as class size and inadequate teaching materials have limited their roles to dispensers of information and testers of student memories.

Now, however, computers, interactive video, distance learning and many other components of technology have opened new opportunities for teachers to impact significantly the teaching-learning process inside the classroom.

To prepare for the new classroom will require formal training programs, both within the colleges and universities for future teachers and in the schoolhouses of the state for current teachers. To fulfill this objective, the state Department of Education is revamping its staff development programs to prepare teachers for the 21st Century Classroom.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 6 -- USE OF STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY IN THE DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION.

This objective has been implied in several of the earlier objectives within this particular goal. The McWherter Administration is firmly committed to establishing the 21st Century Classroom in all school districts in Tennessee.

The vision is clear; the commitment firm.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 7 -- MAKE COMPUTER APPLICATION AN ESSENTIAL GOAL OF THE CURRICULUM.

Obviously, a 21st Century Classroom assumes the presence of computers and an instructional program designed to gain maximum educational benefit from such technology. The "21st Century Challenge" assumes the provision of both financial resources and staff development programs to achieve this objective.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 8 -- SUPPORT DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS IN ALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS WHICH NEED SUCH SERVICES.

This objective is being fulfilled, as cited earlier in another goal. The funding support base has been established in the governor's continuation budget. Twenty-eight distance learning sites have been established, and funding for 14 more a year is in place.

OBJECTIVE NUMBER 9 -- CLEARLY DEFINE METHODOLOGIES, COMPETENCIES, AND PERSPECTIVES APPROPRIATE TO EACH GRADE LEVEL.

This objective shall be fulfilled through the same process outlined in Objective Number 5 of this goal.

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The "21st Century Challenge" outlined above reflects an ambitious and insightful agenda for the policymakers of Tennessee.

It places education front and center as this state's top priority.

It is an honest and sincere statement of the collective view of what Tennesseans from all walks of life have conveyed to state officials in various forums during the past two and a half years.

It is a strategic plan that is in various stages of planning, pilot testing, and implementation.

The stakes are high.

Quite literally, the fate of the state hangs in the balance.

Fulfillment of the stated agenda will require strong grassroots support and vigorous and courageous action by political and educational leaders.

From many perspectives, the timing of "21st Century Challenge" is right.

Within reach for the first time in the state's history is a building consensus of support for making Tennessee's schools among the best in the nation.

All across the state, parents are becoming more and more involved in schools.

Business leaders are becoming more and more aware of the importance of quality schools.

Political leaders are becoming more and more sensitive to the needs of education.

And citizens at large are becoming more and more supportive of increased funding for education.

The bottom line is that Tennessee is primed for the most far reaching overhaul of education in its history.

It will be an overhaul that will forever change the nature and substance of the educational process.

In short, it will produce a different kind of school.

If one were to look into a crystal ball in search of a glimpse of that first day of the 21st century, he or she could expect to see:

* Tennessee schools that are among the best in the nation.

* Tennessee schools that are adequately funded.

* Tennessee schools where students have access to up-to-date textbooks, state-of-the-art technology, relevant curricula, and effective instruction.

* Tennessee schools where principals are in charge of their buildings.

* Tennessee schools where teachers are proud of their profession and involved in decision making.

* Tennessee schools where student achievement is recognized and rewarded.

* Tennessee schools where students graduate with competencies to compete effectively in the job market and/or to succeed in postsecondary education.

* Tennessee schools whose destinies are controlled by involved parents and community leaders.

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